



Erste Bank maintains focus on selective expansion in Central Europe

The Bulgarian Bank Consolidation Company ("The BCC") today announced that it has chosen not to accept the bid made by Erste Bank der oesterreichischen Sparkassen AG ("Erste Bank") relating to the sale of the Bulgarian Savings Bank DSK. The 6 % higher offer price by the Hungarian OTP was cited as the grounds for the decision.

Erste Bank remains certain that its offer, in particular its proposed strategy for DSK would not only have brought significant advantages for DSK's customers but would also have created significant growth opportunities, encouraging the development of the core Bulgarian economy. DSK's development into a modern, customer-oriented bank and the integration of the Bulgarian economy into the European market would have been catalysed through Erste Bank's experience with the mechanisms of the European Union.

Following the conclusion of a thorough due diligence process, Erste Bank made an attractive offer that reflected the realistic value of the Bank. Andreas Treichl, CEO, commented: "With the interests of our shareholders in mind, we have clear targets for our return on equity, and offered a price that makes financial sense."

Despite its interest in a further acquisition to build on its leading European retail banking position of over 10 million customers, Erste Bank will continue to remain focused on price and profitability criteria in the event of further potential acquisitions.